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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined the progress of three Indiana schools (Beech Grove Senior High School, Indianapolis; Linton-Stockton Elementary School, southwestern Indiana; and Richmond High School) toward educational innovation goals under the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project are presented in this paper. Each school is described in terms of its vision and mission, changed features, actual progress to date, and obstacles to change. Although the school environments and goals differ, they share the following themes: clearly defined visions; site-based, shared decision making; and an understanding of restructuring as a learning process. Common obstacles include resistant teachers and a lack of time and training. A copy of the legislation for the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project and a description of six pilot schools' vision plans are included. (LMI)

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Indiana's 21st Century Schools Pilot Project

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Genesis

In 1989 the Indiana State Superintendent of Public Instruction, H. Dean Evans, and the Governor of Indiana, Evan Bayh, decided to collaborate on sponsoring legislation to promote school change that focused on three areas: implementing site-based decision-making, increasing parental involvement, and developing innovative curriculum and instruction. H. Dean Evans appointed a Restructuring Task Force to provide input for that legislation. The task force included a broad range of citizens, including teachers, administrators, state department of education personnel, and education professors.

The legislation, which passed in 1990, established the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project (see Figure 1), and the initial appropriation was set at $860,000. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) publicized the project, and invited schools across the state to attend a kickoff function in which school representatives were able to hear about restructuring efforts across the country. After a series of traveling workshops in various regions across the state, the IDOE invited applications.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The IDOE conducted a two-stage proposal process. The first stage requested a preliminary proposal, the purpose of which was to narrow the field of contestants to those which met the basic preconditions and requirements for successful systemic change. Sixty-seven schools applied, and a review panel (consisting of school people, university professors, and IDOE staff) selected 29 as possessing such qualifications. About 300 representatives from the 29 schools were then provided with a workshop to help them "jump out" of their current mindsets about education, to propose truly bold changes in their educational systems.

The second stage requested full proposals that detailed: (a) any preliminary visions they had for their new schools, (b) the processes they intended to use to further develop their visions, design their new schools, and implement their designs, (c) the commitment of the school and community to the project, and (d) evaluation issues and plans. The same review team selected six proposals, which were funded with grants ranging from a total of $90,000 to $120,000 for up to three years.

Two elementary, one junior high, and three senior high schools were funded. They are broadly scattered geographically within the state, and they represent a cross section of urban, suburban, and rural communities. The funding began in the spring of 1991. Most grant monies are being used for staff development and restructuring resources.

The Six Pilot Schools

The following is a brief sketch of the six pilot schools. Some highlights of the proposal of each school are shown in the appendix.

Beech Grove Senior High School is in a poor urban community in the greater Indianapolis metropolitan area. It includes grades 9-12 and has 36 teachers for 627 students (1:17). It is a safe and stable community with most of its residents living in single-family homes. In Beech Grove, parents tend to feel that a high school diploma and hard work will produce success. However, these attitudes are changing—parents are increasingly recognizing that their children need more than a high school education—and parents are getting more involved with their children's education.

Cherry Tree Elementary School is in a wealthy suburban community north of Indianapolis. It has 25 teachers for 603 students (1:24) in grades K-5. High parental involvement and support for school-related activities are very visible at Cherry Tree. For example, parents are involved in twenty ongoing committees that promote positive educational experiences for their children.

Elkhart Central High School is in a small urban community with a declining industrial base in the extreme north of the state. It includes grades 9-12, and has 81 teachers for 1,565 students (1:19).. It is in a community where low parental involvement is visible and parents are busy with their own jobs. However, the school/community council is in the process of getting parents involved in their children's education.

Linton-Stockton Elementary School is in a rural community in southwestern Indiana. It has 42 teachers for 793 students (1:19) in grades K-5. The community has a history of coal mining and union labor, and the unskilled parents of students were often accustomed to getting well-paying jobs with very little or no formal education. A high dropout rate of students (25% in Grades 9-12) and low parental involvement are common to the community, although things are changing lately as a result of the school/community council.

Richmond High School is in a small urban community with a declining industrial base on the eastern edge of the state. It includes grades 9-12 and has 113 teachers for 1,978 students (1:18). From time to time groups of parents or community leaders concerned about a single issue or particular area of concern emerge in the city.

William H. English MIddle School (previously known as Scottsburg Junior High School) is in a rural community in the Appalachian foothills of southern Indiana. It has 35 teachers for 675 students (1:16) in grades 6-8. Agriculture is a diminishing sector of the economy, and about 70 percent of the farmers have full-time jobs outside of agriculture. Parental and community involvement have increased through its restructuring effort.

A Progress Report

These six schools are in various stages of progress toward their vision of what they would like to become. Each of these schools is unique and represents a different set of circumstances, not comparable in most ways. The remainder of this paper is a report on the progress of three of the six pilots.

Beech Grove Senior High School

Instigation

During the fall of 1989 the Beech Grove Board of Education expressed to the superintendent a serious concern for the small percentage of high school graduates that enroll in post-secondary education. In November 1989 the superintendent shared with the board a challenge for what the schools in Beech Grove need to become by the beginning of the 21st century. The Board accepted the superintendent's challenge and began to develop that vision into a plan to restructure the Beech Grove Schools by the year 2000.

The Restructuring Process as Described in the Proposal

Vision. Beech Grove High School's vision is one which transforms the school environment from a teacher/subject-centered environment to one of extensive discussion, inquiry, research, reflection, and interaction between teacher and student and among students.

Mission. "The mission of Beech Grove High School, as defined by its staff, is to educate the individual to become a contributing member of future society" (taken from the proposal).

Model. "The vision includes the design of a COMPACT—a personally developed guidance contract developed cooperatively in the sixth grade. This COMPACT will list the student's annual goals, identify the student's strengths and competencies, and contain a comprehensive portfolio of the various performance assessments. The student will receive support from a teacher and a community mentor (e.g. a business person). The COMPACT will also link the middle school program, the high school programs, and post-secondary work at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). The university has pledged full college tuition to all students who complete their COMPACTS" (taken from the proposal).

Change Features. The following are the major features designed to date:

- Site-Based Management
  (School/Community Council)
- Student Centered Program
  (Teacher-Assisted Guidance)
  (Student Assistance Program)
- Technology
  (Closed Circuit Television)
  (Telecommunication With Television Studio)
  (Satellite Communication)
  (School-Wide Video Retrieval System)
  (School-Wide Computer Network and Computer Lab)
  (Automedia Media Center)
  (Intra-School Telephone Network with Voice Mail)
  (Automated Attendance Caller and Homework Hotline)
- Modified Time Schedule
  (Six-Day Cycle)

Actual Process to Date

The restructuring effort in Beech Grove High School (BGHS) is basically a teacher-initiated and administrator-supported effort. In January 1990, the staff formed a High School Improvement Committee for restructuring. Subcommittees were formed to address several areas identified by the staff at an all-day retreat that was attended by over 95% of the staff and was facilitated by an independent consultant. By early 1991 the staff had developed an action plan to which they were committed. The plan was incorporated into the grant proposal submitted to the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project.

On January 29, 1991, BGHS was designated a 21st Century Pilot School by the Indiana Department of Education and received a grant. For a year and half since then, the staff have worked very hard to plan and implement what they proposed. The following features of Beech Grove High School are in the implementation stage.

School/Community Council. This is a site-based management team composed of 3 ex-officio members plus 14 individuals who represent a cross section of people from the school, businesses, civic/service organizations, IUPUI, the local government, and parents. The Council established a subcommittee for each of these constituencies; each subcommittee is responsible for getting input from the group it represents. The School/Community Council meets once a month and is the major decision-making body.

Teacher Assisted Guidance (TAG) Program. TAG has been developed to create a school environment that encourages students, teachers, and parents to work together for the best possible personal growth of the students. In this program, each teacher has 15 students with whom he/she meets monthly.

Student Assisted Program (SAP). SAP has been developed in conjunction with St. Francis Hospital to provide support for those students needing special attention and counseling.

Technology. Technological change is the most visible feature of Beech Grove's restructuring.

Modified Time Schedule. The school has shifted from a traditional high school schedule to a six-day cycle that provides different sized blocks of time over the six days.

Even before receiving the grant, BGHS initiated its restructuring process with a vision and goals of the future school, which were developed by the Board in early 1990 for the Beech Grove Schools. A clear vision and goals helped BGHS's restructuring get off to a good start for planning and implementing the features of its vision.

Obstacles

The major obstacle encountered during the restructuring process was lack of time:

- "The problem we are having is that everything we do has to be done while you are trying to do a good job of teaching, and you just run out of time."
- "One of our frustrations is that we are trying to restructure while we are teaching school, and we are also entertaining at least one person a day trying to tell them what we are doing."
- "We are proud of what we are doing, we'd like to share ideas, but at the same token we are here to educate kids, and we want to do that, too".
- It takes time and patience to learn about new technology.
- "Sometimes you run into a problem with the state department because they operate under their system, but they want you to create a new system. For example, we are trying very hard to get lots of things going in the community—we want our students to go out two hours day and work in a different situation to see what it's like. Maybe a Lilly chemist, if the chemist is not a licensed teacher, you perhaps have a problem there too." (The Lilly chemist can only teach students in the presence of a licensed teacher, inside or outside the classroom. The state policy should be flexible in such cases).

Linton-Stockton Elementary School

Instigation

Prior to receiving the grant from the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project in 1991, the Linton-Stockton School Board initiated the restructuring effort by promoting strategic planning in the school corporation.

The Restructuring Process as Described in the Proposal

Vision. Although there was no clear vision stated in its proposal, the Linton-Stockton School Corporation (LSSC) had described some scenarios which it envisioned for its future system, including expansion of the learning environment both mentally and physically beyond the current classroom walls and replacement of traditional time frames with flexible ones.

Mission. The corporation used a strategic planning model to initiate restructuring. The model was derived from both the Bill Cook model and the Crane Naval Weapons Support Center's model of strategic planning. Using their model, they proposed the following committees (teams) for the restructuring process:

1. Planning Team (PT) for the corporation
2. School-Community Council (SCC) for each school
3. Process Action Teams (PATs) for the Corporation
4. Process Action Teams (PATs) for each school

In December 1990 the School Board decided to move its planning and decision-making from administrators and the Board to the Planning Team (PT). The PT would be composed of Board members, school employees, parents, community members, and business leaders; and it would function by the consensus of its members. The PT would be responsible for developing a set of common beliefs, a mission statement, a set of goals, and a set of general strategies to serve as guides for the School Corporation.

After defining the desired future for the Corporation, the LSSC would plan to move to site-based decision-making where each building would form its own School-Community Council (SCC) consisting of 15-20 stakeholders. The SCC would have the authority to create a vision of the future for the elementary school and to develop goals and strategies for moving toward the vision. Each SCC's vision and strategies would be compatible with the mission and goals developed by the PT. The appointed stakeholders of each SCC would be trained in the site-based management processes and group dynamic skills needed for developing visions, making decision, and reaching consensus. The projected date for the formation of the Linton-Stockton Elementary School's SCC was August 1991.

Once the PT established the desired future for the corporation, the work would shift to the SCCs. It was stated in the proposal that in September 1991 the SSC at the elementary school would form its own PAT (Process Action Team), which would develop the detailed plans necessary to move the building toward its desired future structure. The PAT would have three to six months to develop those plans. The PAT would be composed of up to 15 members, including administrators, teachers, students, classified staff, business people, parents, university personnel, and other members of the community. The responsibilities of the PAT would be to analyze the goals for which it took responsibility, brainstorm possible ways for implementing the changes that would be required to achieve the particular goals, and develop detailed objectives to meet the goals. The projected date for the PAT to report its assignments to the PT was to be March 1992. After approval by the PT, the total package for year 1 would go to the Board in June of 1992.

Thus, the various committees and their responsibilities were identified by the strategic planning model. A "kick-off" event was scheduled to be held in February of 1991 to inform stakeholders about the restructuring. There would be some discussion sessions with interested parties to digest and internalize the information about restructuring.

Change Features. In the proposal, the following change features were proposed:

- physical spaces might be altered,
- the learning environment would expand physically and mentally beyond traditional classroom walls,
- traditional time frames would be replaced with flexible ones,
- the school would investigate latch-key programs,
- classroom teaching would be expanded to involve parents,
- a parent support group would be formed,
- opportunities for parents and teachers to meet more often would be created,
- multi-age grouping with differentiated staffing would be implemented,
- the school would explore an arrangement in which a group of students would remain with the same teacher for several years,
- the various subjects would be reorganized around themes,
- the staff would use technology to foster communication among themselves and as a strong component of their instructional and curricular renewal.

The proposal appeared to have an uncertain vision about the future system, but it provided very detailed information about how the various committees would be formed and would function.

Actual Process to Date

In the fall of 1990, the restructuring movement in LSSC became a reality when a group of interested people (i.e., the principals, the superintendent and three teachers) became involved in writing the proposal for the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project. These people conceptualized the restructuring process based on the model of strategic planning, which helped them to identify the necessary committees and teams for the corporation and the schools.

The actual restructuring process did not follow the sequence of events described in the proposal. Linton-Stockton Elementary School's SCC was formed before the PT, and it had identified its goals before the PT. This inconsistency in process was due to the fact that the most involved and interested people at LSSC were from the elementary school, and they had already envisioned the process when they worked on the proposal. Therefore, they started to do things earlier than those in the PT. The PT has about 20 members, including the superintendent, principals, and teachers from the elementary, secondary, and high schools, and community members. According to the proposal, the SCC had to present its work to the PT in order get final approval from the Board. This slowed down the process of restructuring at the building level because four influential members resigned, retired or dropped from the PT, including the superintendent and two principals.

No PATs have been formed for any schools in LSSC. However, a team which is known as the Elementary Restructuring Group (ERG), which is composed of diligent and involved elementary teachers, emerged from the building as the strong proponent of restructuring ideas, plans, and strategies. They proposed their plans to the SCC.

The SCC did not develop the vision, goals, and strategies, even though it had the authority to create them. The Planning team (PT) did that for the corporation. According to the elementary principal, "We didn't feel like the SCC needed to do that because it had already been done." Thus, the creation of the various committees by the strategic planning model was somewhat redundant.

Community Involvement. The school corporation has been very active in using newspaper and letters to invite community people to join the PT, SCCs, and PATs. The Elementary School's SCC conducted surveys of students, teachers and community members to investigate how they felt about new 21st century schools.

New Ideas. So far the restructuring process at Linton-Stockton Elementary School has focused on planning and initiating the process. Some new ideas and features have emerged during the restructuring process. Last spring, one of the teachers brought up the idea to support family literacy and early childhood efforts. The school realized the need for family literacy, because many of the parents have not finished high school and lack skills needed for today's society. The school offered a pilot program on family literacy last summer and hopes to continue the program in the 1992-93 school year.

Continuous Outside Facilitation. A facilitator from the Southern Indiana Educational Service has been involved with the restructuring process. The consultant has experience in using the model of strategic planning and helped the PT to come up with a mission for the Linton-Stockton school community.

Mission, Beliefs, Goals, and Strategies. The mission of the school community is to develop productive citizens committed to lifelong learning in an ever-changing society. The beliefs of LSSC are:

- learning is a lifelong process,

- everyone is a teacher and a learner,
- education is fundamental to a quality life in a free society,
- education requires commitment,
- schools must be willing to change to meet the needs of society.

After the PT developed its mission and beliefs, it came up with the goals and strategies for the LSSC. The goals are:

A. By the year 2000, we will insure that 100% of our students will complete their educational programs.
B. By the year 2000, we will establish school as a place where teachers and learners want to be.
C. By the year 2000, we will make each and all members of the community aware of their roles and responsibilities for education.
D. By the year 2000, we will make each and all members of the school community aware of their roles and responsibilities for education.

Under each goal there are some strategies. Each group works separately with one goal, and at the end all groups meet together in the school auditorium to discuss their goals and strategies.

Features of the New School. The Elementary Restructuring Groups (ERGs) are actively involved in discussing and planning the features of their new school. The following features are in the final stage of planning:

- self-contained classes, split classes and departmentalized classes,
- the fourth-grade thematic approach,
- cooperative learning.

Following the suggestions of teachers in a meeting, a survey was developed about complete self-contained classes, split classes or mixed groupings (i.e., one class may have third- and fourth-grade students), and departmentalized classes. The result of the survey categorized teachers in three different groups. Split classes is the largest group. Each group is supposed to submit their plans for next year in writing to the principal. It seems that students prefer self-contained classrooms because they get to know the teacher a little better and the teacher gets to know them. "I've been both, I've been departmentalized and self contained. When I was departmentalized I didn't feel like I knew my children at all and I didn't know their needs," says the site coordinator.

All fourth-grade teachers have participated in the thematic approach. The teachers are very excited about this approach because it has made a substantial difference in students' attitudes and behavior in class.

Over 60 percent of the teachers received training in cooperative learning over the summer, and they are becoming more adept at using this strategy in their classrooms.

In addition, the ERG is currently planning the following features:

- staff development,
- communication within staff,
- parent development.

Comments. It seems that the creation of many committees and teams by the strategic planning model is unnecessary for a small community like Linton-Stockton. The same people are often on several teams. The second year, after the PT identified the vision, goals, and strategies for the school community, it was no longer needed to work as a middle manager between the SCC and the Board. It appears that it would be fruitful to let the SCC go to the Board directly, instead of going through the PT.

Obstacles

The major obstacles encountered during the restructuring process were:

- fear of change,
- size of the school (i.e., hard to get consensus),
- physical change (moving from one classroom to another),
- worries about the unknown,
- logistics ("If you only have three people in third grade that want to do something different and only two in fourth grade, then you have to make a balance between that until somebody else is ready to move on with you."),
- lack of commitment,
- some teachers are close to retirement age and are not very excited about the change,
- "They say it's a great idea, but they don't do anything about it,"
- not enough time for teachers to do planning,
- lack of release time for attending conferences and workshops,
- state policy allows only 6 half days for in-service,
- it is difficult to get the staff together in a situation where all of them can be trained instead of just few.

Richmond High School

Instigation

When the Superintendent came to Richmond two years ago, he brought the concept of restructuring and site-based, shared decision making. Thus, the restructuring effort started at Richmond before receiving the grant from the IDOE.

The Restructuring Process as Described in the Proposal

Vision. Richmond High School proposed to create a school-within-a-school. It envisioned grouping students heterogeneously on ability into smaller interdisciplinary blocks, each with a set of teachers from different departments (i.e., English, math, social studies, etc.). The smaller units of students and teachers would develop long-term relationships between teachers and students.

Mission. "The mission of the restructuring project is focused on learning and is to redesign the organization of the school and to change instructional practice, so that all teachers teach well and all students learn well" (taken from the proposal).

Model. The Richmond Community Board of School Trustees endorsed the Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (I.D.E.A.) process model—a building-based, shared-decision-making model: "The Board has approved the implementation of this process model and further has extended to site-based teams the authority to create curricular/instructional/cultural designs that meet the unique learning needs of the children served at each school" (taken from the proposal).

Change Features. In the proposal, the following change features were proposed:

- infusion of critical thinking into content areas,
- extensive use of computers as tools for active learning,
- site-based school management involving shared decision making,
- student as a thinker and producer,
- teacher as a strategist, leader, colleague and facilitator,
- classroom as a community.

Actual Process to Date

Richmond High School proposed to implement a 21st Century school-within-a-school in the fall of 1991. A lack of common vision became the prime cause of a delay in the original

plan. In Richmond, no plans for the 21st Century school-within-a-school could be implemented without the approval of two-thirds of the staff. Therefore, it was very important for the restructuring at Richmond to wait for a common vision of people resulting from common beliefs.

The delay in the restructuring process was also caused by the grant's call for community involvement. As the principal put it, "Actually, we were working with a small group of teachers that decided to apply for the grant. The grant said that as much of the community as possible needed to be involved. Once we got the grant, we had to start all over again and involve more people in it, and it's taking us a year longer really to implement what we want to do." According to the site coordinator, "the grant said the school had to have site-based decision making, so we had to form a team. Site-based shared decision making is an extremely slow process because we work on consensus."

Awareness of the change. The students and the community were informed about the school-within-a-school approach and its features through newsletters and newspaper articles. The site-based team is composed of 15 individuals, including teachers, parents, and community members. They have attended meetings and workshops, visited restructuring schools, explored and shared ideas for the vision of the new school, worked on reaching consensus, and received training in site-based decision making and planning. According to the coordinator,

> "the key was that we really were NOT FOCUSSED on what we want to do—everybody kind of had their own little thing—until we had an all-day retreat. We sat down with all the members of the restructuring team, brought in some consultants to help us work through what our problems were and where we needed to go from there, and came out of that retreat much more focussed in the sense of what needed to be done and how that timeline needed to be done. After the retreat, we broke into groups of interest: topics such as integrated curriculum, different types of learning, motivational techniques, etc. There were about 3 people in each group. When we broke up into groups WE GOT A LOT MORE DONE. Then each group came back and they brought back all the information for the entire team to use as DIALOGUE, and from that dialogue we were able to start making some giant leaps."

Finally, On March 11, 1992, Richmond High School developed the plans for the 21st Century school-within-a-school, which was approved by a majority (87%) of the teachers. The following "Century 21 Learning" statement represents the shared vision of the 15-member site-based team:

> **CENTURY 21 LEARNING** in our Twenty-First Century School will be accomplished by very active, participating students. The instructors will act as facilitators, coordinators, and resource persons directing the educational process. A variety of learning situations, activities, projects, and approaches will be prevalent in the educational process, including the following:
>
> 1. Individual and group projects will be incorporated.
> 2. Short and long term projects will be employed.
> 3. Collaborative, individual, and interdisciplinary activities will be evident.
> 4. Student assistants will (a) help other students, (b) lecture, and (c) plan programs.
> 5. Community adult assistants will assist as (a) resource persons, (b) lecturers, (c) program planners, and (d) student helpers.
> 6. Students will have community and/or school-service responsibilities.
> 7. Parents will be involved as active participants in their children's course planning and educational directions.
> 8. Student choices and responsibilities will be evident in the learning process.

9. Learning opportunities away from school will be available.
10. Modern Technology will be incorporated into learning activities.

Changes in Decisions

There have been some situations where the site-based team changed its original plans for several programs due to suggestions from various sources.

Full-day to half-day operation. Initially, full-day operation was proposed for the 21st Century group. However, it was not received positively by some staff because they thought that they would lose students in their elective classes (e.g., foreign language, business). For example, if 150 students of the 21st Century group stayed together all day, they would not be able to take electives like foreign language unless there were a foreign language teacher in the 21st Century group. To avoid this problem, the team decided on half-day operation for the group instead of full-day. This will allow students to take elective subjects in the fifth, sixth and seventh periods.

Decrease in number of students in the group. The school decided to implement a half approach instead of the full approach that was proposed initially. The half approach will have 75 students and 3 teachers instead of 150 students and 5-7 teachers.

Status of Richmond High School's Restructuring Effort

After a long initiation process, Richmond High School has come up with the following plans for its program's continuity:

A. Year one (AY 1992-93)
   1. Groups will depend on faculty interest.
   2. Groups will also depend on students' volunteering.
   3. One, two or three 21st Century groups may be formed to serve 75, 150, or 225 students with 3, 6, or 9 teachers.
   4. Ninth grade only will have a program in the first year.

B. Year two (AY 1993-94)
   1. A tenth-grade program will be offered for students coming through the freshman program.
   2. A new program will be started, with new volunteer teachers and students for the ninth grade.
   3. An experimental program for the eleventh grade may be established as well.

C. Continuations of the program will be based on the ebb and flow of teacher and student volunteers.

D. Proposed program changes of substance that may come about (e.g., a full-day program) will be coordinated through the regular RHS site-based team acting as a special purpose subcommittee. Such changes will be brought to the teachers for final approval.

E. Program evaluation will be performed at the end of the first two years of the program (anything earlier would have insufficient time to be effective). Techniques which will be used will include:
   1. Retention rates of students.
   2. Changes in quartile standings of those who participate.
   3. Teacher and student evaluation tool.

F. Program continuation/demise will be determined as follows:
   1. Faculty and students will have the opportunity to "vote with their feet" (to volunteer or not).
   2. If the program fails for one group, that will be the time to seriously evaluate whether or not to continue the effort.

Comments. The 10 activities, projects and approaches of Century 21 Learning are more or less consistent with Richmond's initial proposal. Although the initial proposal was written by few individuals, "Century 21 Learning" is the result of 15 team members' shared visions for a new school and was approved by a majority of the teachers. In the shared-decision making process, team members sometimes had to make changes in their plans in order to honor others' views. An example of such is the change from full-time operation of the group to half-time operation.

Obstacles

The major obstacles encountered during the restructuring process were:

- Lack of time.
- Lack of common vision: "The key was that we really were NOT FOCUSSED on what we want to do, everybody had their own little thing until we had an all-day retreat, sat down with all the members of the restructuring team, brought in some consultants to help us work through what our problems were and where we needed to go from there, and we came out of that retreat much more focussed in the sense of what needed to be done and how that timeline needed to be done."
- Lack of understanding: "Not being able to TRULY EXPLAIN why we were trying to get where we were going."
- Complacency: "People were resistant to change to begin with—we're so departmentalized here—and by cracking all that, you're trying to upset something where people are very comfortable now. They are comfortable with what they are doing—they feel like they are doing a very good job. Trying to get people to change is not easy."

According to the site coordinator, "There are problems to come, we've got lots of work ahead in terms of getting these things to fit into a master schedule and getting students involved."

Conclusion

These three pilot schools have unique situations with unique problems and unique solutions. However, there are some common themes. All initiated their efforts prior to the announcement of the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project. All have found a clear vision of their future school to be very important. All have found site-based, shared decision making to be an essential part of the restructuring process, to generate ownership. And all have found that the restructuring process is, more than anything, a learning process—a process of changing people's mindsets about what education should be like. That's another reason why shared decision-making and community involvement are important. And all realize that they are only on the first leg of a long and difficult journey.

As far as obstacles are concerned, all found that there are teachers who resist change, and they slow down and complicate the process. All find they lack sufficient time, for systemic restructuring is very time consuming, especially with shared decision making. And all find that they lack the training and experience needed to make the restructuring process most effective and efficient.

In spite of these problems and the ever-looming danger of burnout, teachers in all three schools have found that their efforts make a difference to students. But these brave pioneers realize that they cannot continue indefinitely to expend the levels of effort that they have during the past year. Their hope is that once the transition period is over, their workload will become reasonable again, and the quality of life for themselves and their students will be much better than it is now. Time will tell.

Endnote:

Some of the material in this paper is drawn from the six pilot schools' restructuring-related publications.

Legislation

SECTION 32. IC 20-10. 1-26 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS:
Chapter 26. Twenty-First Century Schools Pilot Project

Sec. 1. The department shall establish a twenty-first century schools pilot program to do the following:

(1.) Increase the involvement of parents, teachers, administrators and local civic leaders in the operation of the local school.
(2.) Provide more responsibility and flexibility in the governance of schools at the local level.
(3.) Encourage innovative and responsive management practices in light of the social and economic problems in the programs.
(4.) Provide grants to schools selected by the department to implement twenty-first century schools pilot programs.

Sec. 2. (a) The department shall administer the twenty-first century schools pilot program.

(b) Unexpended money appropriated by the department for the department's use in implementing the pilot program under this chapter at the end of the state fiscal year does not revert to the state general funds but remains available to the department for the department's continued use under this chapter.

Sec. 3 To be eligible for the selection as a twenty-first century schools pilot program grant recipient, a school must do the following:

(1) Apply to the department for a grant, on forms provided by the department, and include a detailed description of the school pilot program.
(2) Demonstrate a significant commitment by teachers, parents, and school administrators toward achieving positive outcomes in school activities.
(3) Establish a school/community improvement council consisting of parents of students, school personnel, and representatives of the community.
(4) Comply with all other requirements set forth by the department.

Sec. 4. A pilot program eligible to be funded under this chapter must include all of the following:

(1) School-based management models.
(2) Parental involvement strategies.
(3) Innovative integration of curricula, individualized education programs, nonstandard courses, or textbook adoption in the school improvement plan described under IC 20-1-1.2-7(a) (2) (G).
(4) Training for participants to become effective members on school/community councils.

Sec. 5 To encourage participation in the pilot program by local schools, a school corporation that is selected to participate in the pilot program is not required to comply with certain state standards as determined by the department with the consent of the board.

Sec. 6 Upon review of the applications submitted by schools under Section 3 of this chapter, the department shall select the schools to participate in the twenty-first century schools pilot program.

Sec. 7 Each participating school shall prepare a written report to be submitted to the department that includes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the school concerning the school pilot program.

Sec. 8. The department shall develop guidelines necessary to implement this chapter.

Sec. 9 The department may employ personnel necessary to implement this chapter.

Figure 1. Legislation for the 21st Century Schools Pilot Project

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A Word of Caution--

The brief descriptions which follow reveal only some elements of the initial proposal each school submitted to the Indiana Department of Education. They reflect part of the intended "product" of the restructuring process, the goals of the school in terms of curriculum and instruction. They do not accurately reflect the "process" the schools will use as they discuss the implications of these products. Restructuring involves changing the school culture in ways that reinforce better learning and teaching. These schools are not focusing themselves only on objective changes in curriculum and instruction, but on subjective changes which involve attitudes and values.

Beech Grove High School

Beech Grove High School's vision is one which transforms the school from a teacher/subject centered environment to one of extensive discussion, inquiry, research, reflection, and interaction between teacher and student and among students. A flexible daily schedule will replace the traditional seven period day. Active participation and increased use of technology by students will be part of the daily routine. Students will demonstrate mastery of critical concepts through performance objectives. The teachers and principal plan to create an interdisciplinary/team approach around basic knowledge areas; for example, the Humanities, Science/Technology/Math; the Applied Arts; and the Performing Arts. Students will have a wide range of activities to pursue during the day, ranging from traditional classes, small group work, and individual and group research.

The vision includes the design of a COMPACT — a personally developed guidance contract developed cooperatively in the sixth grade. This COMPACT will list the student's annual goals, identify the student's strengths and competencies, and will contain a comprehensive portfolio of the various performance assessments. The student will also receive support from a teacher and a member of the community or a business representative. The COMPACT will link the middle school program, the high school programs, and post-secondary work at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. The university has pledged full college tuition to all students who complete their COMPACTS.

Support for the student will come from many avenues: from the connection between the middle school and high school program, the link with the business community, and the link to higher education. This comprehensive approach to the student's education will require more active parental involvement which Beech Grove sees occurring in many ways through development of the "extended family" in Beech Grove.

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Cherry Tree Elementary

Cherry Tree Elementary's vision is one that provides each student with a challenging and success-oriented environment regardless of ability, age, or talents. The vision suggests a school that will provide a nongraded personalized plan to expand the learning environment in and out of school through cultural and community resources. Different instructional methods will be used to help students develop the best in themselves.

All parents will be invited to apply for membership on the School Home Community Council. In addition, parents will create a community resource file; schedule coffees and professional speakers; and participate in school workshops, round table discussions, and site visits to other schools. The issues which the school explores —crossing grade level barriers, student adjustment issues, assessment through personal learning plans, learning styles, home learning strategies, and analysis of placement — will include parental representation.

Cherry Tree will explore thematic approaches for designing curriculum, create a flexible time frame, and rearrange subjects for teaching. An individual plan will be developed for each student in the fall, cooperatively designed by the parents, student, and facilitating team. Portfolios and weekly logs will provide a record of each student's work and progress. To help facilitate the time required for planning and continued development of the program, the school will hire four permanent substitute teachers to allow staff to meet regularly during the day and to allow all faculty to participate in the alternative program.

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Elkhart Central High School

The mission of Elkhart Central High School is to enable students to think critically, to adapt to change, and to work cooperatively as responsible citizens. The importance of lifelong learning is a key element of this vision with teachers emphasizing learning HOW to learn, with dropouts being encouraged to resume their education, with the staff pursuing professional growth, and with adults in the community participating in courses as students and/or resource persons. The vision emphasizes cooperation between and among students, staff, parents, and community agencies. The vision also includes defining and working toward objectives through the development of personalized learning plans, redesigning curriculum in innovative ways, and developing the tasks of the School/Community Council.

Elkhart is exploring the reorganization of subject area departments to facilitate interdisciplinary learning that will reduce duplication of instruction, increase innovation, and increase collaboration among teachers. The school is also exploring an outcomes-based approach to develop the curriculum and will shift its educational emphasis to a student-as-worker/teacher-as-facilitator model. A critical component of the plan is active engagement of students in community service programs.

Elkhart also plans to coordinate with community agencies more directly. First on the agenda is a series of town meetings in which parents and community members can affirm the vision statement or contribute ideas to change it.

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Linton-Stockton Elementary

Linton Stockton's planning group has realized that the entire school environment will undergo drastic change. The school has made a commitment to create a completely new way of schooling. Instead of applying scores of "patches," in the form of isolated programs, the team will coordinate the creation of a whole new "suit." Physical spaces may be altered, the learning environment will expand physically and mentally beyond traditional classroom walls, and traditional time frames will be replaced with flexible ones. The process by which the school is restructuring itself is based on the model of strategic planning.

The school hopes to break the passivity that parents, teachers, students, administrators, and community have all experienced in the past. The school will investigate latch-key programs, expand classroom teaching to involve parents, form a parent support group, and create opportunities for parents and teachers to meet more often. The curriculum and instruction will shift dramatically through the ways classes are staffed and children are grouped across ages. The school will explore an arrangement in which a group of students will remain with the same teacher for several years. The various subjects will be reorganized around themes and taught in such a way that skills will be applied and integrated, rather than disjointed, as they tend to be currently.

Another feature of the Linton-Stockton plan is the use of electronic networking. The staff will used technology to foster communication among themselves and as a strong component of their instructional and curricular renewal.

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Scottsburg Junior High

The vision for Scottsburg Junior High School promotes greater student success, ioncreased parent/community involvement, and more teacher participation in decision making. It also requires the entire community to address the needs of young adolescents, rather than create isolated and disjointed changes in curriculum and instruction. To address student needs, learning experiences such as active and cooperative learning, peer and cross-age tutoring, and alternative assessment strategies will constitute a different approach to teaching. To help accomplish this vision, Scottsburg will be using the principles of the Accelerated Schools Project to promote innovation within the school. Acceleration means higher expectations for ALL students, not fast-paced learning.

The school plans to use this model of learning to pull together all facets of the curriculum and instruction so that it can create an organizational structure that fosters high self-esteem and greater aspirations for everyone involved.

To help facilitate this new vision, a Parental Involvement Cadre has been formed at the school to encourage more meaningful parental involvement in the educational program. Parents are being involved in training for site-based decision making and community wide workshops are being developed.

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Richmond High School

Richmond High School's vision groups students into smaller interdisciplinary blocks, each with a set number of teachers and a cross section of students from all four grade levels. The key to restructuring for this high school is to create long-term relationships between students and teachers. The vision of learning is one in which the student is a thinker and producer; the teacher is a strategist, leader, colleague, and facilitator; and the classroom is a community.

The vision includes restructuring the subject areas to encourage critical thinking, extensive use of computers as tools for active learning, and site-based decision-making. Envisioned outcomes are students who stay in school; do not fail; learn independently for understanding and active use of knowledge; think creatively and critically; and know and use strategies involved in problem-solving and decision-making. All of these will be modeled and used by teachers.

Parental and business involvement has already begun within the community through an extensive survey of parent attitudes and opinions, involvement of parents in site-based management training, and involvement by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.

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